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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Avon VFW Post 3272 Auxiliary announces national charter changes and seeks new members**

The Avon VFW Post 3272 Auxiliary has changed its name due to a national decision to include men into their organization. According to a recent release from their national office, John A. Biedrzycki Jr., national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) added his official signature to the new congressional charter of its Auxiliary organization in a historical event solidifying the VFW's commitment to membership equality for all military families. The former Ladies Auxiliary VFW, founded in 1914, is the VFW's highly regarded support organization and is considered its "Partner in Service." Under its former name Ladies Auxiliary VFW, membership within the organization was offered exclusively to female spouses and family members of any member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The gender-specific eligibility requirement remained for more than 100 years until July 20, 2015, when delegates to the VFW's 116th National Convention in Pittsburgh voted to amend the dated by-law to extend the same membership opportunity to eligible males. Appropriately, the Ladies Auxiliary VFW has changed its official name to the VFW Auxiliary.

Nationally, the Auxiliary has more than 465,000 members, a number that is now expected to sharply increase over the next year. Its members represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia, several foreign locations including Germany, Guam and Panama, and have made an impact in local communities around the globe. Last year alone, its members worked to provide \$4.6 million dollars in monetary aid to veterans, active duty military and their families, and volunteered nearly 800,000 hours in VA Medical Centers, hospitals, nursing and veterans' homes. Auxiliary members also contributed greatly to cancer research, youth activities, civic patriotism, awarded scholarships and more than 300,000 American flags.

Membership in the VFW Auxiliary now includes U.S. citizens or U.S. Nationals over the age of 16. They include husbands, wives, widowers, widows, fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, and brothers and sisters of veterans eligible for membership in the VFW. The Avon Auxiliary extends an invitation to join for anyone who qualifies.

In Avon, CT, the Auxiliary is a very active group of over 50 members who provide hundreds of hours of community service that benefit not only military veterans and their families, but anyone who interacts with them. According to their president Cathy Walton, "The VFW members are an amazing group of veterans, both men & women. The change in our national charter brings with it the potential for the VFW Auxiliaries to grow, and be able to do even more for our veterans."

In particular the Avon Auxiliary provides handmade fresh wreaths for the Avon Memorial Day Services at local cemeteries and Town Green. They also donate them for the "Final Salute Ceremony" at funerals of VFW Post members. They volunteer with members of the Avon Congregational Church Quilts of Valor which makes quilts for returning or ailing veterans to provide comfort and support. The members also purchase and prepare food for the dinners served before each month's VFW and Auxiliary meetings. They will again participate in the 2015 Wadsworth Athenaeum Festival of Trees with a very patriotic theme! New this year will be a Festival of Wreaths during the month of December at the Avon Free Public Library. Volunteers are needed for all these and other activities of the Auxiliary. For a membership form, go to the Avon VFW Auxiliary website, [www.avonvfwaux.com](http://www.avonvfwaux.com) or contact Avon VFW Auxiliary President, Cathy Walton, at 860-673-3771.

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The Auxiliary is a fraternal, patriotic, historical and educational affiliate of Posts of the VFW. It's objectives are:  
Provide assistance to the VFW Post and its members whenever possible; Provide assistance to the Auxiliary members whenever possible; Maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America; Maintain fidelity to the Constitution and Laws of the United States of America; Foster true Patriotism; Maintain and extend the Institutions of American Freedom, Equal Rights and Justice to all men and women; and Preserve and Defend the United States of America from all her enemies whomsoever.